

FCC & Media Diversity

Reasonable people may discuss the pros and cons of Michael Powell's proposed changes to media ownership rules. It is ludicrous on the surface of the issue, however, that 5 un-elected (appointed) men get to determine the future of a valuable public resource such as spectrum and the impact that decision may have on the flow of independent thought and opinion in a great democracy.

The FCC has been very high-handed in the matter by refusing to publish its proposed rules and not allowing time for, or consideration of, public comment. There is wide spread resistance to the proposed rules from organizations ranging from Consumer Reports to the National Rifle Association and many others in between these unlikely allies.

I doubt anything can prevent or change the outcome of Monday's vote by the FCC at this point. Congress should immediately haul these bureaucrats to hearings where they get to explain and defend what they are thinking. They should also get to explain just why it is that special interests are paying travel expenses for staff and commissioners. Finally, the same hearings should include active public interest groups to explain their side of the issue and, of course, public input should be encouraged and allowed.

Let's have a serious national debate of the issue!

Media ownership has long-term implications for the public good and the strength and vitality of the country.

I encourage you to get involved.

Any media ownership changes are a decision for the Congress and the FCC should have no role. If the FCC commissioners do legally have a policy-making role it is time to relegate them to technical and enforcement issues, which should keep them plenty busy.

The people, through the Congress, should decide communications policy and spectrum usage issues.

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